

PREP-FOR-COMBAT NOW BRINGS 'PAIN PENALTY' FOR MISTAKES

Army Fields New Standardized Kit for Force-on-Force Training

MAJ (RETIRED) CHARLES PAVLICK

In June, the U.S. Army began fielding the newly standardized Close Combat Mission Capability Kit (CCMCK) that enhances Soldier, leader and unit prep-for-combat training in the close fight. When struck by CCMCK projectiles in a less protected (legs/arms) location, Soldiers experience a "pain-penalty" for mistakes such as failing to use suppressive fire, cover, concealment, and proper individual movement techniques (IMTs). The Army's standard CCMCK is now in place at Training Support Centers (TSCs) located at Forts Bragg, Campbell, Riley, and Stewart. Fort Benning's fielding is scheduled for August 2009. Follow-on fielding to other installations/TSCs is to be completed by end of October 2009.

Components of CCMCK

The CCMCK system allows Soldiers to temporarily convert their go-to-war weapons with "drop-in" conversion bolts for M4/M16s and M249s and "drop-in" barrels for M9 and M11 pistols. Converted weapons allow for normal weapon employment functioning, for example, aiming (with or without mounted optics/accessories), loading, firing, ejection, immediate action, re-loading and clearing procedures. Soldiers gain immediate target feedback through force-on-force, interactive live-fire scenario tasks, and mission execution rehearsals.

Once weapons are cleaned (projectiles fly best through brush-cleaned and dry barrels) and converted, they can fire the force-projection element of the system — the CCMCK 5.56mm and 9mm marking ammunition — using standard weapon magazines. The red and blue marking projectiles distinguish red-force and blue-force shot placement and travel at velocities of several hundred feet per second, thus requiring Soldiers to wear the face protection that is also a component of CCMCK. Once temporarily converted, weapons cannot fire standard service ammunition until restored to original configuration.

Proven Value

Pre-standard versions of CCMCK-like capabilities have been in use by Army conventional forces, Rangers, and Special Operations Forces, as well as by training centers for several years. Pre-standard



Figure 1 — "Drop-in" Bolts and Barrels

CCMCK versions have also been used by the Maneuver Battle Lab and during the Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning. The pre-standard versions were procured at unit expense directly from commercial vendors, thus attesting to its recognized value and effectiveness toward the preparation of Soldiers for combat. Soldiers commonly refer to these pre-standard versions as "UTM" and "Sims" (ultimate training munitions and/or simunitions) based on the vendors that produce the conversion kits and munitions. After using these pre-standard versions, Soldiers/units provided feedback to the Small Arms Branch, U.S. Army Infantry Center, that was instrumental in defining the key performance capabilities needed for Army operational requirement documents. Soldier participation in follow-on evaluations and testing further supported the down-select and acquisition processes toward Army standardization.

Proven Effectiveness

The CCMCK capability was specifically identified as a contributor to OIF success by the 82nd Airborne Division during an after action review presented by the division's chief of staff at an Infantry Warfighter Conference. The CCMCK improves

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individual and collective task performance regarding the development, refinement, and fighting skills maintenance in the execution of tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) and SOPs.

Improvements Ahead

Army-approved objective capability requirements and feedback from Soldiers provide the basis for follow-on improvements under consideration for CCMCK. Some of the improvements include more realistic, weapon recoil and noise signature, improved functioning with MILES, longer shelf-life for ammunition, and more reliable functioning at extreme temperatures. When the improved munitions are ready, current capability munitions are consumed in training pending new munitions production/fielding.

How To Get CCMCK

Similar to MILES, units may draw, conduct training, and return CCMCK (bolts,

barrels, protective masks) from local installation Training Support Centers. The CCMCK munitions (similar to blank and other training ammunition), must be STRAC (Standards in Training Commission) allocated in support of unit training and/or institutional programs of instruction (POI). For organizations needing to retain CCMCK hardware, the bolts, barrels and protective masks may be requisitioned via CTA 50-970 Expendable/Durable Items, maintained at unit level and documented on unit property books.

Summary/Synthesis

Additional must-know information regarding safety, rules of engagement, maintenance, and the technical function and performance associated with CCMCK is available at the AKO Web site: <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/566738>

SOLDIER + TRAINING + OPTIC + WEAPON + AMMUNITION = EFFECT

Figure 2 — Marking Munitions and Face Protection



The following quotations are typical of the hundreds of comments provided by Soldiers after using the CCMCK:

"The TTPs (hallway clearing) originally developed using MILES resulted in 100-percent casualties within my squad when rehearsed with CCMCK ... It forced us to re-examine and modify our how-to-fight SOPs."

— Staff sergeant/squad leader, 75th Ranger Regiment during mission rehearsal and shoot-house prep.

"No more guesswork with a beeping MILES sensor. That blue mark and stinging welt on the back of my arm is fratricide My fire team is not in-sync yet We need another run-through."

— Sergeant/fire team leader, 3rd Infantry Division

"We have to triage and treat the casualties where the marker rounds impact ... it's more realistic than an arbitrary (casualty) card pulled by an OC (Observer/Controller)."

— Specialist/medic, 10th Mountain Division

"My Soldiers are better shots now."

— Sergeant first class/platoon sergeant, 3rd Infantry Division during hot-wash from the CCMCK evaluation run by Maneuver Battle Lab.

Based on unit prep-for-combat/training objectives, the Close Combat Mission Capability Kit is intended to augment and complement Engagement Skills Trainer, MILES, and other live-fire training methods. Battlefield effect is gained via a synthesis of Soldier, Training, Optic, Weapon, and Ammunition. The Army's standard CCMCK is now providing a different dynamic addition to realism and training with the fighting tools in the warfighter's toolbox.

MAJ (Retired) Charles Pavlick is contracted as a project officer for Small Arms Branch, Soldier Requirements Division, Maneuver Center of Excellence, Fort Benning, Ga. He was commissioned through OCS. His active duty tours included serving with 5th Special Forces, 1-52nd Infantry/1st Armored Division, 2nd Infantry Division, 501st Military Intelligence Battalion, The Infantry (test) Board, and Infantry Combat Developments.